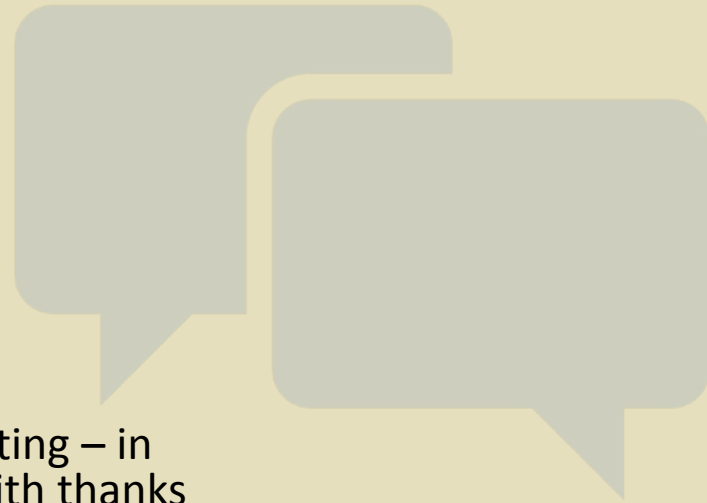# Effective Meetings

Thoughts on hosting – and participating – in productive and helpful meetings. With thanks to Scott Adams, a creative genius who knows about meetings.

Steven Miner
VLGMA Winter Meeting
February 2019

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Sli.do Polls

- Go to: www.sli.do – Polling site or use Sli.do App
- VLGMA Winter Conference I
- Enter Event Code: #Meetings

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Poll 1, 2, & 3 Results

Event Code: Meetings

Is This Your Meeting??

Or Is This Your Meeting?

Elon Musk says "Meetings are What Happens When People Aren't Working"

Why Concern Ourselves With Meetings??

1 -They're Expensive –

http://tobytripp.github.io/meeting-ticker

2 – They Keep Us From Important Every Day Tasks

3 – They are essential

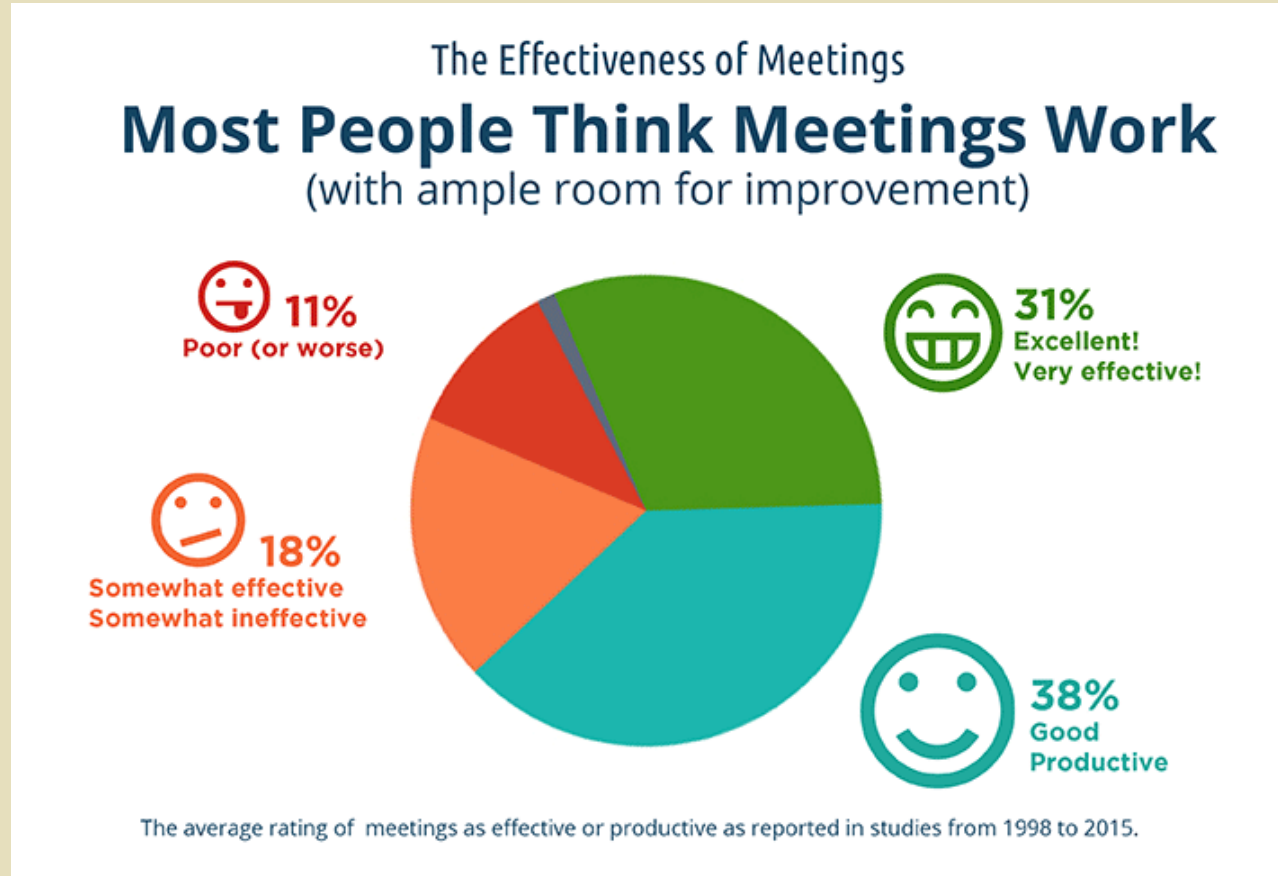# Meetings Should Use Employees' Time Effectively

What Do People Think About Meetings?

The Effectiveness of Meetings

Most People Think Meetings Work
(with ample room for improvement)

😛 11% Poor (or worse)

😁 31% Excellent! Very effective!

😐 18% Somewhat effective Somewhat ineffective

🙂 38% Good Productive

The average rating of meetings as effective or productive as reported in studies from 1998 to 2015.

https://blog.lucidmeetings.com/blog/fresh-look-number-effectiveness-cost-meetings-in-us

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But Folks Also Said This:

Doodle's 2019 State of the Meeting Report collected data off of 19 million meetings in the US and UK.

It found:

- **44%** said "Poorly organized meetings mean I don't have enough time to do the rest of my work"
- **43%** said "Unclear actions lead to confusion"
- **38%** said "Bad organization results in a loss of focus on projects"
- **31%** said "Irrelevant attendees slow progress
- **26%** said "Inefficient processes weaken client/supplier relationships".

Source: https://meeting-report.com/

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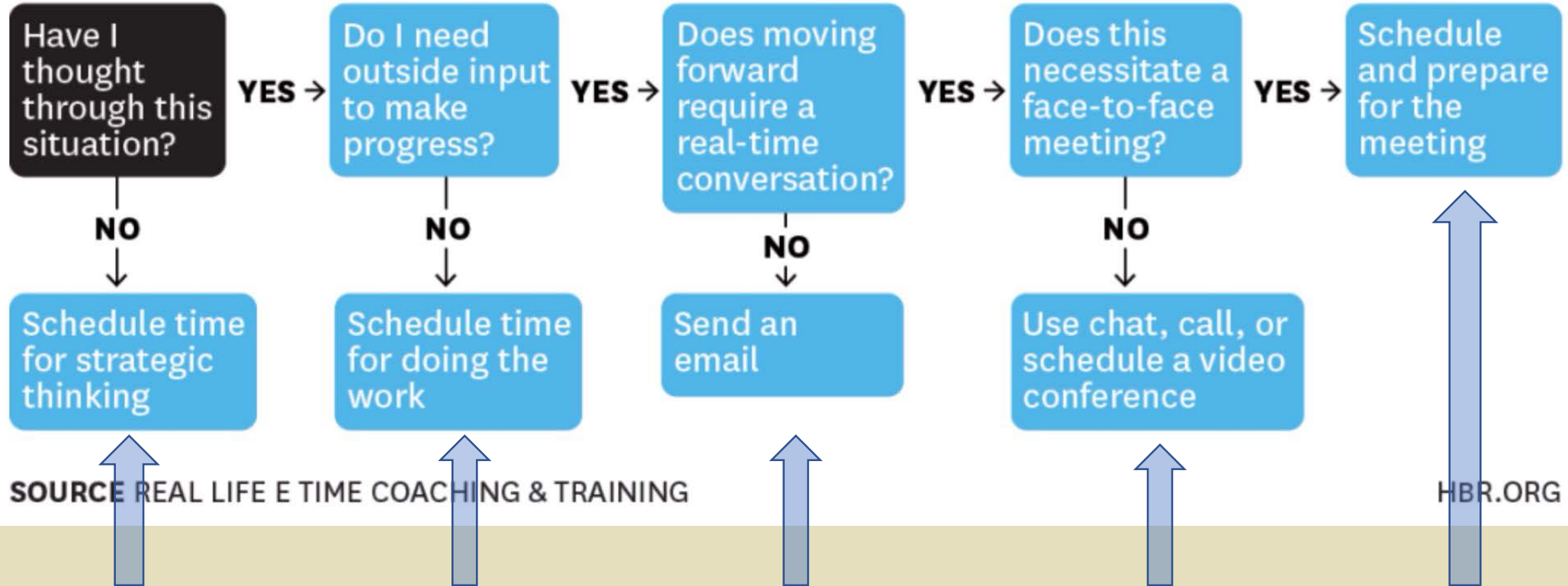
Many Types of Meetings

- **Project Meetings** – to discuss shared project tasks and progress

- **Status Meetings** – to keep team members and leaders informed about items they need to know

- **Emergency Meetings** – to inform of sudden or disruptive changes

- **Decision Meetings** – to learn or to change behaviors and set direction

- **Company Meeting** – to inform employees

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Two Fundamental Rules on the Decision to Hold a Meeting

1. Face to face meetings should be limited to those that are needed.

2. There should be reciprocity. All participants should gain a benefit.

Meeting Decision Tree

SHOULD I HOLD A MEETING?

Have I thought through this situation? → YES → Do I need outside input to make progress? → YES → Does moving forward require a real-time conversation? → YES → Does this necessitate a face-to-face meeting? → YES → Schedule and prepare for the meeting

NO → Schedule time for strategic thinking

NO → Schedule time for doing the work

NO → Send an email

NO → Use chat, call, or schedule a video conference

SOURCE REAL LIFE E TIME COACHING & TRAINING

HBR.ORG

Think it Through　　**Do it Yourself**　　**Email**　　**Call or Video**　　**Meet**

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Don't be the Pointy-Haired Boss (PHB)

Scene 2

Best Human Practices

1. Be mindful of room comfort!

2. If possible, hold your meetings in the morning – people tend to be most alert around 10:00 a.m.

3. Consider taking emotional and professional checks before starting the meeting

4. Include rest breaks

5. Consider that the average adult attention span is probably less than 20 minutes

6. For team or breakout meetings, keep it to no more than eight (8) persons for greatest productivity – less is more

7. Ban electronic devices

8. Remember the introverts!

1. Have <u>Specific</u> Objectives or Purposes for the Meeting

- **Know your desired outcomes** before you start and design the agenda to accomplish that.

- **Limit objectives**
  - What do you want people to learn?
  - What will people be prepared to do afterwards?
  - What needs to improve or change?

- **RECIPROCITY, RECIPROCITY, RECIPROCITY** – Always remember it's about learning/acting on problems/understanding issues

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2. Develop an Precise Agenda

- **Design** your agenda to resolve issues

- Keep it <u>*short*</u> and <u>*on point*</u> – *Don't overload it*

- Be mindful of your agenda language – use words like **"determine, select, decide, choose",** <u>*not*</u> **"discuss, review, information or recap"**

- **Send** it at least 24 hours in advance

- **Include study materials** or read them together before the meeting starts (Bezos 'cold start')

Involving Others

3. Encourage Full Participation

- Have a **facilitator/chair** manage the discussion

- Encourage everyone to participate and spend much of your time **discussing the merits of various options or solutions to problems**, rather than the supporting information

- **Encourage minority views**

- Ask probing questions to **'prime the pump'**

4. Meeting Arrangements

- Ensure that everyone can hear and is included – don't park them far away
- The leader should not sit at the head of the table – sit in the middle
- Provide snacks and take breaks
- Ensure the right people are there and *others aren't*
- Stray thoughts? Park 'em!
- Use a White Board to consolidate group thoughts
- Designate a note taker (or do it yourself), get copies of all notes and create and send a composite action list within twenty-four hours
  - Action items should have due dates and person responsible
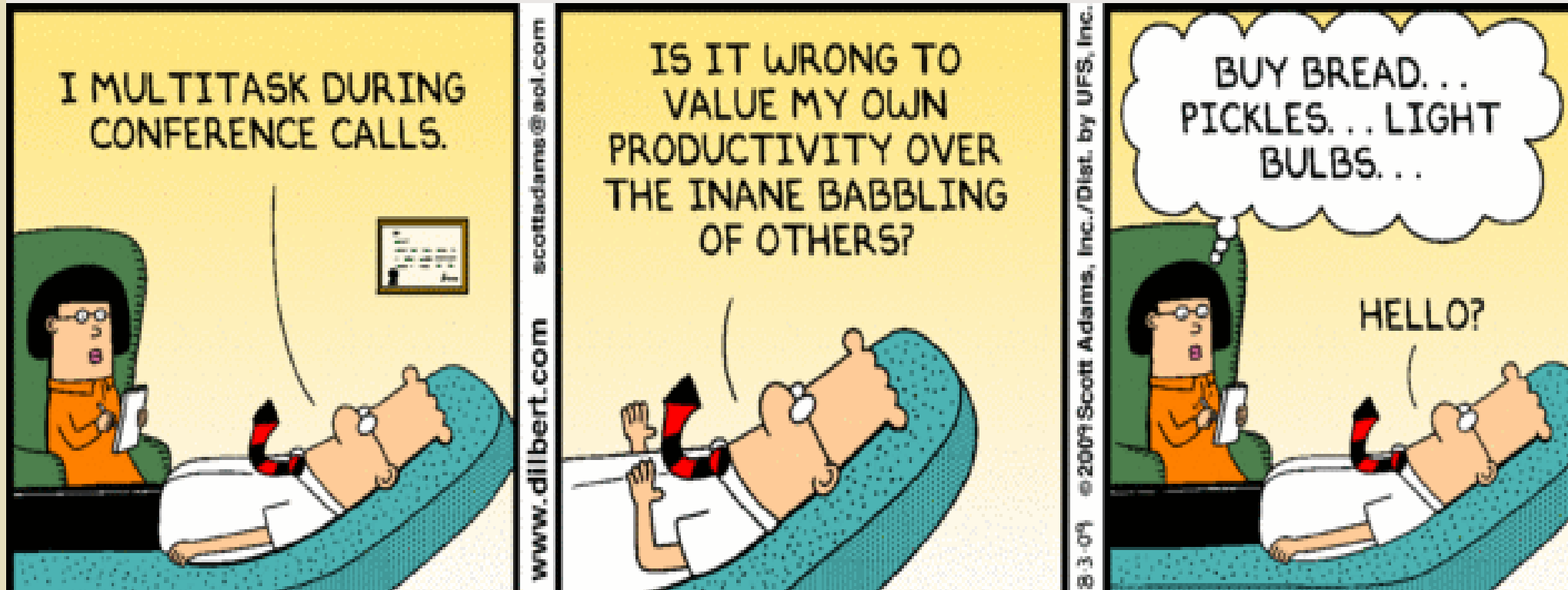
Participating in Productive Meetings

- **Participation is Everyone's Responsibility**

- **Leaders should actively encourage it by:**
  - Involving reports by assigning reports, duty to develop agendas, lead meetings
  - Asking reports to identify and solve problems collectively

- **Employees should live the organization's values**
  - There is an unwritten quid pro quo in organizational life
  - Strive to develop themselves and contribute to solutions
  - Actively take on projects for the good of the group
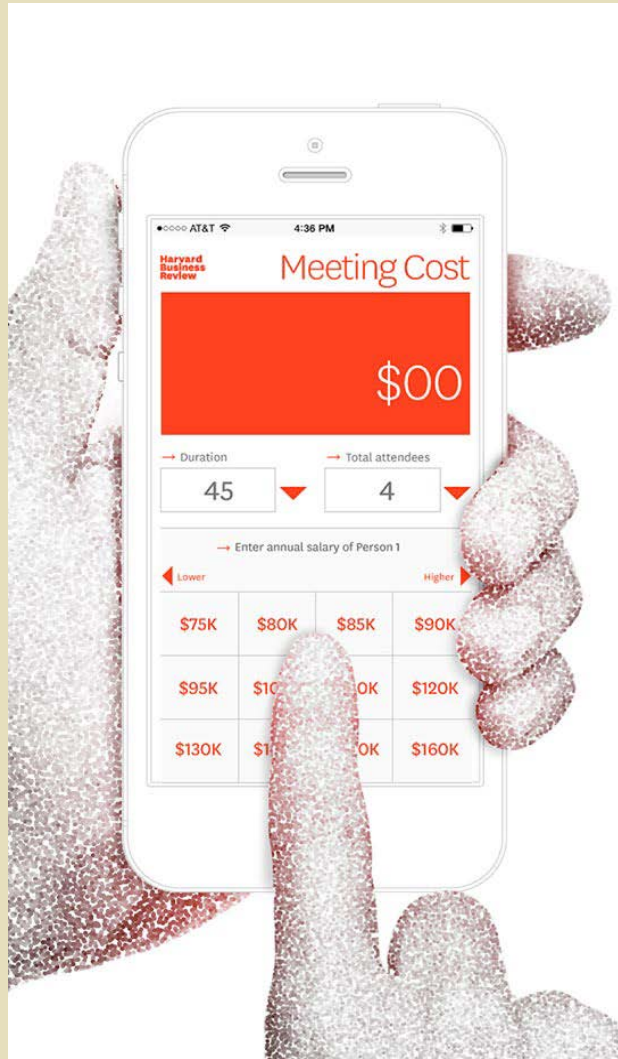 - Raise business concerns in meetings that you feel in private

While Employees Should Do unto Others . . .

Downloadable app (IOS and Android versions)

https://hbr.org/2016/01/estimate-the-cost-of-a-meeting-with-this-calculator

Helpful app when deciding whether to call a meeting!

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Thanks!